

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VALLET 01000 271155Z

45

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /081 W

----- 014354

R 271030Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6952

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 1000

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US, MT

SUBJ: REACTION TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: STATE 211862

1. REACTION IN THE MALTESE PRESS TO THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT HAS BEEN VERY LOW KEY. ON AUGUST 19, 20, 21 AND 24 THE CONSERVATIVE TIMES OF MALTA CARRIED FRONT PAGE ARTICLES FROM REUTER'S SERVICE WHICH TENDED TO REFLECT THE US/SOUTH KOREAN POSITION. THE FIRST MENTION OF THE INCIDENT IN THE PRO-LABOR GOVERNMENT MALTA NEWS WAS A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE ON AUGUST 21. A SECOND ARTICLE, ALSO CARRIED ON THE FRONT PAGE, APPEARED ON AUGUST 23. BOTH WERE ASSOCIATED PRESS RELEASES THAT EMPHASIZED STRONG US REACTION TO INCIDENT, BRINGING KOREA "CLOSER TO THE BRINK OF WAR". MALTESE LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS CARRIED TRANSLATIONS OF THE SAME ARTICLES WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMMENT.

2. THE ONLY MALTESE EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT APPEARED IN THE TIMES OF MALTA ON AUGUST 21. ENTITLED "TENSION IN KOREA" THE EDITORIAL STATED AS FOLLOWS:
"THE MURDER OF TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA HAS BROUGHT SHARP REACTION AND RENEWED TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. BOTH THE NORTH KOREANS AND THE AMERICANS HAVE PLACED THEIR FORCES ON THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VALLET 01000 271155Z

ALERT, WITH THE AMERICANS REINFORCING THEIR TROOPS WITH TWO

FIGHTER SQUADRONS. NORTH KOREA HAS PLACED ON FULL ALERT NOT ONLY ITS REGULAR ARMED FORCES BUT ALL MEMBERS OF THE WORKER-PEASANT RED GUARDS, THE IMPLICATION BEING ONE OF FULL MOBILIZATION.

"KOREA, SINCE THE WAR OF THE 1950S, HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET, HAVING BEEN OVERSHADOWED BY EVENTS IN VIETNAM AND OTHER PARTS OF INDOCHINA. BUT THAT SUCH A MINOR INCIDENT OVER TREE-CUTTING CAN CAUSE BLOODSHED AND RESULT IN PREPARATIONS FOR A FULL SCALE WAR, UNDERLINES THE UNEASE THAT EXISTS AT THE BORDER AND CASTS GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT ANY SUGGESTION TO REUNITE THE TWO HALVES OF THE COUNTRY. IT ALSO STRENGTHENS THE NEED OF THE CONTINUED PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRY OF AMERICAN FORCES WHO TODAY NUMBER 41,000.

"A CALL WAS MADE AT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AT SRI LANKA, FOR AMERICANS TO WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH KOREA. THAT WOULD MEAN A COMPLETE COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER OF SOUTH KOREA ON THE SAME LINES AND WITH THE SAME RESULTS AT THOSE IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA."

3. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF THE STRONG POLITICAL SUPPORT WHICH THE MALTESE LABOR GOVERNMENT GIVES TO NORTH KOREA IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, THE LOCAL MEDIA REACTION TO THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY NONCOMMITTAL. THERE HAS, THUS FAR, BEEN NO OFFICIAL GOM REACTION WHATSOEVER. WIGGINS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976VALLET01000
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760327-0540
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760810/aaaaailq.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 211862
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 MAY 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <24 AUG 2004 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTION TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT
TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US, MT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006